

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 14-22 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend the claims to read as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

12. (Currently Amended) A method for signaling failures in a ~~Multiplexed Shared Protection Ring telecommunication~~ring network (~~1~~) comprising a plurality of ~~nodes or network elements (NE1, NE2,...NE6)~~ and a plurality of fiber spans connecting the network elements (~~NE 1, NE2,...NE6~~) in a ring configuration such that one network element is connected via said fiber spans to an adjacent network element on a west side and to another adjacent network element on an east side, the fiber spans comprising incoming and exiting working channels on each side of said one network element for carrying information traffic and incoming and exiting protecting channels on each side of said one network element for protecting said information traffic, the method comprising the steps of

detecting a failure affecting incoming and working protection channels on the east side of said one network element,

~~protecting information traffic installed in said telecommunication network by carrying out Switch operations between said working and protecting channels, said Switch operations being driven through protection words (PRW) exchanged among the nodes (NE) of said telecommunication network, said method further comprising the step, carried out by a node~~

~~(NE1) receiving a Signal Fail (SF) signaling on an incoming span (SP) and being in a Lockout Of Working Channel (LKW) state, of sending properly coded protection words (PRW) in opposite directions through the ring network (1) so as to signal the failure to the other network elements transmitting from the west side of said network element an indication of a performed ring switch for protecting information traffic over said failed working channel on the east side,~~

~~wherein the step of sending properly coded protection words (PRW) comprises the step of sending protection words (PRW) requesting the node (NE2) adjacent to the node (NE1) that receives a Signal Fail (SF) signaling and transmits on the failed connection (CNE), to verify the failure that has occurred and to take a protecting action corresponding to the failure that has occurred~~
receiving a command for requesting suppression of said ring switch;

maintaining said performed ring switch; and

transmitting from said west side an indication of said performed ring switch and of said external command.

13. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 12, wherein said ~~protection words~~indication of a performed ring switch ~~comprise~~comprises a four-bit Bridge Request Code (BRQ) field, characterized in that the step of sending ~~properly coded protection words (PRW)~~ said indication of a performed ring switch comprises the step of sending protection words (PRW) comprising an all zeros combination in said Bridge Request Code (BRQ) field.

14-22 (Canceled)

23. (new) A method for managing a protection mechanism in a ring network, wherein a network element is connected to an adjacent network element on a west side and to another adjacent network element on an east side, each side including incoming and exiting working channels for carrying information traffic and including incoming and exiting protection channels for protecting said information traffic, the method including the steps of:

detecting a failure affecting incoming working and protection channels on the east side of said network element;

transmitting from the west side of said network element an indication of a performed ring switch for protecting information traffic over said failed working channel on the east side;

receiving a command for requesting suppression of said ring switch;

maintaining said performed ring switch; and

transmitting from said west side an indication of said performed ring switch and of said external command.

24. (new) A method according to claim 23, further including the steps of:

receiving said indication at said adjacent network element;

in case of detecting another failure affecting incoming working and protection channels on the west side of said adjacent network element, maintaining said performed ring switch, otherwise suppressing said ring switch.

25. (new) A method according to claim 24, further including the step of:

in case of detecting said other failure, transmitting from the east side of said adjacent network element another indication of said performed ring switch, otherwise transmitting another indication for requesting suppression of said ring switch.

26. (new) A method according to claim 23, wherein said indication is carried over a Multiplex Section of Synchronous Digital Hierarchy or a Synchronous Optical Network of an exiting protection channel on the west side of said network element, said Multiplex Section including a first field for indicating said performed ring switch and including a second field for indicating said external command.

27. (new) A method according to claim 26, wherein said first field is a Status field of a K2 byte and said second field is Bridge Request code field of the K2 byte, said Status field being assigned to binary value "0000" and said Bridge Request code field being assigned to binary value "010".